



Local Technical Assistance (LTA) Project Scope: North Lawndale Neighborhood Plan

The following is a proposed outline of steps to develop a comprehensive neighborhood plan for the Westside Chicago neighborhood of North Lawndale, as part of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP) Local Technical Assistance program. Through this program, CMAP will provide staff assistance to complete this planning project. The plan will focus on future land use, economic development, housing, transportation, green infrastructure, parks and open space, workforce development, arts and culture, and building capacity and partnerships.

Approximate Timeline

The following scope of work is designed to be completed in approximately 18 months; however, the timeline can change as the project progresses. The remainder of this document describes the schedule and timeline in more detail. All dates are approximate and may be revised depending on time requested by project partners to accommodate additional community outreach or time to review interim deliverables.

Planning Study Area

The plan will focus on the North Lawndale neighborhood. The planning area boundaries are defined by the three rail corridors that surround North Lawndale on the east, south, and west. Roadways near the rail lines include Western Avenue to the east, 24th Street to the south, and Kilbourn Avenue to the west. The northern boundary of the planning area is defined by the Community Area 29 northern boundary which follows along the Taylor Street corridor with the exception of a portion Arthington Street and 5th Avenue. The plan will also consider plans and analysis completed for surrounding community areas and neighborhoods including Little Village, Garfield Park, Tri-Taylor, and Austin.

Background

North Lawndale has not had a comprehensive planning process in nearly 60 years. While there are several plans that have been developed over the years, or are in process now, these initiatives focus on select areas of the community and none establish policies for North Lawndale as a whole. And while other parts of the community are poised for growth and reinvestment, there are some areas of the community that have not been touched by any planning activities.

A new North Lawndale Neighborhood Plan is needed to ensure that on-going and future initiatives complement and do not compete with one another for limited resources. The new plan will also provide much needed direction to the isolated portions of North Lawndale and identify strategies to attract private investment. Lastly, the new plan will help foster a sense of place within North Lawndale that leverages the community's unique assets and heritage and projects an image that is welcoming to residents and visitors alike.

Areas of Focus

The new plan will provide an opportunity to highlight key assets that are unique to the North Lawndale community such as Douglas Park and the boulevard system, as well as positive changes that are already occurring in the neighborhood such as the Homan Square development. Other key areas of focus for the planning process include the following:

Ogden Avenue & Roosevelt Road Corridors

As the primary commercial corridors in North Lawndale, Ogden Avenue and Roosevelt Road are important assets for the community and will be major focus points of the plan. The plan will evaluate the designation of commercial/retail and social/medical service nodes along these corridors. ULI Chicago has also expressed interest in undertaking a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) to develop recommendations for revitalizing Roosevelt Road (between Kostner and California Avenues) in North Lawndale. Current retail success and failures along with future potential and alternative uses will be examined for the corridors.

16th Street Corridor

Portions of other important corridors such as 16th Street may also receive additional attention as the planning process moves forward and community priorities are identified. 16th Street is of particular significance to North Lawndale as it passes through the heart of the community.

Transit-Oriented Development

Development opportunities that could be supported by the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) Pink Line in proximity to the Central Park station will be evaluated. This area is of particular importance to the community given its strategic location adjacent the Ogden Avenue corridor. The Kedzie, Kostner, and Pulaski station areas will also be assessed.

Economic Development

Numerous economic development mechanisms are in place in North Lawndale including 6 tax increment finance (TIF) districts, an Enterprise Zone, and a HUBZone. The plan will evaluate the use of these tools with respect to the implementation of plan recommendations. The plan will also evaluate related incentive programs and identify areas that may be desirable for future reinvestment based on the various existing and recommended economic development initiatives.

Steering Committee

For the purposes of the North Lawndale Neighborhood Plan, CMAP will utilize the existing Steering Committee of the North Lawndale Community Coordination Council (NLCCC). NLCCC is a group of stakeholders, including community-based organizations, business owners, elected officials and individuals that have come together to guide planning and implementation in the North Lawndale community area. The Steering Committee currently provides a diverse mix of participants representing the vast interests of the North Lawndale community. Based on the content of the finalized scope, CMAP will coordinate with NLCCC to fill any gaps that may exist either based on topic area expertise, geographic representation, or implementation capability. Also, City of Chicago staff as well as elected officials will be invited to participate in Steering Committee meetings throughout the process.

Throughout this scope of work, this group is referred to as the “Steering Committee.” The exact makeup of this group will be finalized early in the planning process. CMAP will look to the Steering Committee to provide assistance by:

- Providing feedback on the existing conditions report, recommendations, the draft neighborhood plan, and other elements of the process;
- Identifying key community stakeholders (individuals and organizations), and coordinating community engagement activities at regular meetings of key community stakeholder organizations;
- Participating in public events – acting as table facilitators, translators, presenters, or other support roles during public workshops and community-wide meetings;
- Disseminating information about public meetings to their community networks;
- Identifying, and on occasion inviting, participants for focus groups; and
- Other support and advice as needed.

Deliverables

The final deliverable of this project will be a goal-oriented neighborhood plan for the North Lawndale neighborhood. Interim deliverables, including an existing conditions report, key recommendations memo and a draft plan, will also be produced during the planning process. Interim deliverables will be submitted to the Steering Committee by CMAP staff.

Proposed Tasks

Pre-kickoff Work (Feb.-Mar. 2016)

Before the project formally kicks off, there are several steps that CMAP will go through with NLCCC, City Staff and elected officials. These include:

- NLCCC Executive and Steering Committee will need to adopt a resolution expressing support for the planning project and authorizing members to participate. NLCCC and CMAP will sign a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that explains expectations for the relationship between CMAP and the applicant, project management, access to resources etc. The MOU document will need to be signed before the project formally begins. CMAP can attend such meetings at the request of the NLCCC.
- A project Steering Committee will be formalized. The membership of the Steering Committee will include the current NLCCC Steering Committee and any additional members deemed necessary by CMAP, City of Chicago staff or NLCCC members.
- CMAP will prepare a draft outline of the outreach strategy and discuss with NLCC before the project is initiated. NLCCC will be asked to identify relevant stakeholder groups to include in public engagement activities and to help CMAP make contacts locally.
- Aldermen, county and state elected officials will be kept abreast of project news and invited to provide input at all stages of the planning process. DPD, NLCCC and CMAP will coordinate to inform officials of the project details and invite them to participate and support activities specific to the neighborhood plan in addition to parallel NLCCC activities.

The activities above will necessitate at least one in-person meeting between CMAP and NLCCC as well as continued communication throughout the planning process. These activities will occur prior to the “formal” kickoff meeting with the Steering Committee.

Phase 1 – Project Initiation & Outreach Strategy (Mar.-Jul. 2016)

The planning process will begin in March 2016 with meetings between CMAP staff and the Steering Committee as well as local elected officials, City of Chicago staff, and key regional implementers. Likely meetings include:

- Initial Steering Committee meeting (in early March 2016). The purpose of this meeting is to introduce CMAP’s role in the planning process to the Steering Committee as well as to discuss the committee’s expectations for the project. Other topics may be addressed during the first kick-off meeting (i.e. SWOT analysis, brainstorming of stakeholder groups etc.)

- City of Chicago staff meeting to discuss the North Lawndale neighborhood plan scope as well as current and future City planning projects that can include or affect the North Lawndale process (i.e. Status of federal resiliency funding/planning). CMAP staff will engage various City departments as needed, but will mainly coordinate with DPD for the duration of the planning process.
- Meetings with elected officials including city, county, and state representatives as requested including an overview of the planning project and presentation of the preliminary community outreach strategy.
- Meetings with officials and staff from key public agencies such as CTA and major implementation partners including, but not limited to Steans Family Foundation, Chicago Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), Lawndale Christian Health Center, Cook County Land Bank, and Chicago Community Loan Fund. Additional implementation partners to engage will be identified with assistance from the Steering Committee.

Community Outreach Strategy

A primary goal of all CMAP projects is to elevate community engagement in planning—particularly focusing on engaging populations that are typically underrepresented in public planning processes. A detailed community outreach strategy will be developed at the outset of the North Lawndale planning that closely follows the existing outreach model of NLCCC. The community outreach strategy will identify opportunities for plan specific outreach and engagement activities and will outline the goals and methods for public participation.

The Steering Committee and community leaders’ full participation in the engagement process is vital to the success of the plan.

The draft community outreach strategy will be discussed in general terms with NLCCC representatives in the pre-kickoff stage and developed in more detail for presentation and approval by the Steering Committee. In signing the joint MOU and approving the community outreach strategy, the NLCCC will agree assisting with outreach initiatives as identified in the strategy.

Potential community engagement strategies that will be evaluated in creating the outreach strategy include:

- A **robust community survey** to solicit public input on a wide variety of topics. This survey can be distributed at key community locations as well as online.
- Use of an **interactive website (MetroQuest)** allowing public input.
 - MetroQuest can be accessed online and from personal technology devices. CMAP and NLCCC will work with neighborhood tech centers and public libraries to provide access to those without personal technology.
 - An example of MetroQuest for a community planning process can be found at <https://nch1eu01.metroquest.com/> (North Chicago Comprehensive Plan).

- Presence at **community events, festivals, concerts, and meetings**.
- **Youth engagement** activities at local churches, community centers, and schools.
- **Community education sessions** on land use planning and the North Lawndale planning process.
- Community engagement activities at **regular meetings of key community stakeholder organizations** such as places of worship. By meeting people where they are, the goal of these activities will be to efficiently reach as many stakeholders in the community as possible, and introduce the project, learn about their vision for the future of North Lawndale, and identify the issues and opportunities that need to be addressed to achieve that vision.
- **Key person interviews or focus groups** with residents, business owners, property owners, institutions, and organizations.
- In addition to outreach events hosted by NLCCC and its partners, approximately five **CMAP-led public meetings** will be held during the planning process. Dates shown here are approximate and may be delayed due to additional time needed for the timing of supplementary outreach or review time for interim deliverables.
 1. An initial public introduction to the project and planning education session will occur in late March 2016.
 2. A meeting to present the findings of the Existing Conditions Report will occur in summer 2016. Timing of this meeting and the delivery of the Existing Conditions Report will depend on the outcomes and timing of the community outreach to be conducted at the outset of the process.
 3. A visioning workshop will be conducted in fall 2016 where residents and stakeholders of North Lawndale are invited to discuss their vision for the community as a whole.
 4. A meeting to discuss preliminary recommendations and implementation strategies will occur early 2017, prior to any significant progress in the development of the draft plan.
 5. An open house to present the draft plan in the spring/summer 2017.

Other ideas regarding outreach will be added following discussion with NLCCC representatives.

***Deliverable:** A project community outreach strategy that lays out key stakeholders and outreach methods for the length of the project. As the project progresses and the activities are completed, the document will be updated to describe the results of the outreach, so that it functions as a report on the results of work completed.*

Phase 2 – Existing Conditions Analysis (Mar.-Aug. 2016)

An important interim product in the development of the neighborhood plan is the Existing Conditions Report. This report will describe current conditions in North Lawndale and look at how things have changed in recent years. It will synthesize information gathered through stakeholder input, field observations, demographic data, previous studies, and other sources. A draft of the report will be prepared and presented to NLCCC representatives, City staff, and the Steering Committee. The report will describe existing conditions in the neighborhood and will present information that informs preliminary plan recommendations. Throughout the document, findings from the project’s community engagement effort will be included as qualitative data that informs the planning effort. The report will include information on but not limited to:

- **Community History & Past Plans**

This section will include a brief overview of North Lawndale and a history of Chicago’s West Side. Past plans and studies having an influence on the new plan will also be reviewed including, but not limited to:

- Roosevelt-Homan Redevelopment Project Area TIF Redevelopment Plan (1990);
- An Economic Development Initiative for North Lawndale (1997);
- Roosevelt/Cicero Redevelopment Project Area TIF Redevelopment Plan (1997);
- Homan-Arthington Redevelopment Project Area TIF Redevelopment Plan (1997);
- Western/Ogden Redevelopment Project Area TIF Redevelopment Plan (1997);
- Midwest Redevelopment Project Area TIF Redevelopment Plan (2000);
- North Lawndale Quality of Life Plan: Faith Rewarded (2005);
- Community of Hope: Economic Revitalization Plan for North Lawndale (2007);
- Report of the Revitalization of North Lawndale (2007);
- Plan for the Ogden Avenue Redevelopment (2007);
- Kostner Avenue Redevelopment Project Area TIF Redevelopment Plan (2008);
- Community Based Alternative Plan – Save Our Schools (2013);
- Plan for Douglas Boulevard;
- North Lawndale Gateway;
- Plan for the Roosevelt Road Commercial Corridor; and,
- Plan for urban agriculture along 16th Street.

- **Land Use & Development**

This section will present information on current land use in the North Lawndale neighborhood. It will also identify underutilized parcels that present opportunities for land use changes to spur reinvestment and development.

- **Demographic & Housing Profile**

This section will include a demographic and housing market profile for the entire neighborhood based on the Census and other sources.

- **Economic Development & Market Analysis**

This section will analyze current economic and commercial market conditions primarily along the Ogden Avenue and Roosevelt Road corridors, including topics such as retail leakage, rent and vacancy trends, and householder age and income, and more. To a lesser extent this section will consider the Pulaski Road and Western Avenue corridors.

- **Mobility**

This section will cover transportation options and infrastructure, ridership trends, and related information. Walkability, biking, driving, and parking will also be discussed. Recognizing the importance of regional mobility, transit routes and destinations beyond the boundaries of this study area will also be evaluated including the nearby CTA Blue line and major bus routes.

- **Sustainability & Resilience**

This section will include information on the natural environment, stormwater and flooding, parks and open space, and green infrastructure and their role in ensuring a sustainable and resilient neighborhood.

- **Brief Comparison to Similar Neighborhoods**

We will compare the current conditions and trends in North Lawndale with those of nearby or similar communities to provide perspective as to how North Lawndale has fared within a broader context. Decisions on which data points to be used for comparison will be guided by the priority topics and planning issues that emerge through the outreach process.

- **Other Issues of Community Interest**

The existing conditions report should reflect community input into the most pressing issues facing the neighborhood, even if those issues are outside the scope of what can be addressed in the final plan document. For example, many communities wish to discuss education, crime and safety, and other topics outside of CMAP's expertise. The report will acknowledge and examine the importance of these issues and the ongoing work of the NLCCC's 11 topical subcommittees in relation to the community. The Existing Conditions Report will identify what components of the issues can be addressed by plan recommendations. Topics include:

- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Technology
- Education and Youth Development
- Communications
- Health and Wellness
- Parks and Recreation
- Workforce Development/Job Creation
- Public Safety
- Arts and Culture
- Economic Development

***Deliverable:** An Existing Conditions Report that includes charts, maps, and other graphics to support the text description of the topics listed above. It is a stand-alone product, which will be an appendix to the final report.*

Phase 3 – Visioning & Key Recommendations (Sept.-Oct. 2016)

Following the Visioning Workshop, a vision statement will be developed that represents a shared vision of the neighborhood’s future. This will be informed by the existing conditions report and previous public engagement (including key stakeholder interviews, MetroQuest results, and the public kick-off meeting). The vision statement will not contain specific recommendations for action, but will provide general principles to be accomplished through the project.

In concert with development of the vision statement, and before the final plan is drafted, CMAP will prepare a memo describing the key recommendations that are expected to be contained in the final plan. This document will be provided to NLCCC representatives, DPD staff, and the Steering Committee for review and discussion. Based on feedback received, the draft plan will begin to be prepared. The purpose of this step is to provide the Steering Committee members with a summary of key recommendations before much time is spent writing them in detail; if there are significant problems with any elements of the plan, they should surface at this point.

***Deliverable:** A memo summarizing key recommendations that will be made in the plan to achieve the vision, based on existing conditions findings and stakeholder involvement. This will be an internal working document containing initial ideas and is not meant for public distribution.*

Phase 4 – Plan Development (Nov.-Apr. 2017)

After reaching consensus on the key recommendations the draft plan will be developed. A draft will be sent to NLCCC representatives, DPD staff, and Steering Committee members for review. The Draft North Lawndale Neighborhood Plan will then be revised based on staff and Steering Committee comments, creating a revised plan.

***Deliverable:** The plan will include text recommendations for action, with support from graphics and maps. It also will include language concerning implementation, including descriptions of actions that should be taken within the next two years to advance its recommendations.*

Phase 5 – Approval (May-Jun. 2017)

The revised Draft North Lawndale Neighborhood Plan will be presented to the community for its review and approval. This will include a community-wide open house to present the plan to the community and receive feedback. Persons unable to attend the open house will be provided other means to contribute their feedback, including, but not limited to, the project’s interactive website and non-electronic means of input facilitated by NLCCC and other organizations represented on the Steering Committee. If necessary, key persons and organizations interviewed during the first phase of community engagement may be asked for their feedback to the draft plan.

The draft plan will be revised if necessary based on this community feedback to create a final North Lawndale Neighborhood Plan. The plan will be presented to the Steering Committee for consideration for approval. Should NLCCC and City of Chicago decide at the onset of the project to pursue adoption of the plan by the City of Chicago Plan Commission, the process will initiate once the Steering Committee recommends the final plan for approval.

***Deliverable:** The format of the final North Lawndale Neighborhood Plan will be the same as that of the draft plan, except with a higher quality of graphics.*

Phase 6 - Implementation (Jul. 2017)

After the plan is adopted, CMAP will remain involved to monitor and encourage progress on the implementation actions specified in the plan. This will be a much lower level of involvement, but will include meeting periodically with NLCCC representatives and other community organizations and partners, tracking and monitoring progress in accomplishing the plan's recommendations, assisting with applications for funding for plan implementation, and similar activities.